

FOCUS: HIGH ROAD WEST

Living in limbo

Residents on Love Lane Estate frustrated by lack of communication with council

By *Bella Saltiel*

Residents on the Love Lane Estate say they have been “left in the dark” on the future of the High Road West (HRW) regeneration plan.

The HRW plan – a partnership between Haringey Council and property developer, Lendlease, will see the west side of Tottenham High Road regenerated to facilitate a £1billion pound development, which includes 2,500 market-rent homes, 750 affordable homes (households paying up to 45% of their net income on housing costs) and 500 council homes.

The scheme intends to tackle homelessness and inequality by increasing jobs and housing in the east of the borough. However, in order to be completed, property around HRW will be demolished, including the Love Lane Estate. Tenants who might be displaced are now asking that the council rethink its plans to include more of the community’s suggestions.

Delayed Vote

The council will need to secure necessary funding from the Greater London Authority, and provide evidence of Love Lane residents’ support. A ballot, to follow a six-week consultation on the resident rehousing offers, was previously scheduled for September 2018, but then delayed several times before being pushed to summer 2020. It has been delayed yet again because of Covid-19 restrictions.

There are 45 secure tenants, 26 resident leaseholders and 200 temporary residents currently living on the estate. The ballot is a decisive moment for temporary residents who are not guaranteed housing in the new development.

Over the years, the makeup of the estate has changed, precipitating concern about community cohesion. 167 secure tenants have moved off the estate since plans for the development were approved in 2014 and 17 resident leaseholders have sold their properties.

The Love Lane Residents Charter (presented to the council in 2014) written

by the Love Lane Residents Association stated ‘we are worried that the redevelopment will destroy our existing community...’ therefore ‘the test of the success of the regeneration is how many of our residents chose to stay.’ So far, just 30% of the original secure tenants and resident leaseholders remain.

Ongoing uncertainty

Uncertainty has driven people away, says Maud*, an elderly resident living as a secure tenant, and the latest delays on the ballot just prolong the uncertainty. Lloyd Grandson, a resident leaseholder, says “things have ground to a halt with the lockdown,” but communication has often been sporadic with

“no progress made for eight years now.” “A lot of the consultation has been done behind closed doors” it is “a constant source

of frustration that nobody speaks to us.” The council maintain they have consulted extensively with tenants.

To proceed, the council will need to buy resident leaseholders homes. They will be offered market rates and an extra 10% compensation. However, the new properties on the development will be worth more than the market value of their current homes. Lloyd worries it will be unaffordable. Thinking of the years he has spent working to pay off his current mortgage, he feels a sense of injustice and worries he will not be able to get a second mortgage now that he is over the age of 60.

The council hopes some of these problems can be solved through shared-equity – which would see them co-owning the property. Lloyd shrugs this option away as a mere token saying it will still leave him financially worse off if he cannot leave a legacy for his children. He is thinking of selling up, as he says: “I can’t live in limbo for another eight years.” Lloyd could suffer a financial blow if he sells now because properties in regeneration areas are less valuable.

Some residents are in favour of regeneration. Parts of the estate have needed an update for years, says Florence*, another resident leaseholder, but she has become less certain as the years go

on, wondering if she will be left a casualty in a whirlwind of change if she cannot afford a new property without taking out another mortgage.

The demolition of the Love Lane Estate was originally part of the Haringey Development Vehicle, an unpopular scheme, scrapped in 2018, that would have seen public land transferred to Lendlease in a 50-50 ownership. The council settled with Lendlease out of court, and continued their partnership in the new HRW development scheme.

Shops along Tottenham High Road will also be demolished.

The Peacock Industrial Estate (a community of freehold business owners and traders) are being offered a new space in Enfield, to make way for the proposed homes, a new library and learning centre, a refurbished community hub, civic square and green spaces, shops, restaurants and cafes.

Businesses forced out

Businesses that could be displaced oppose the development. Tottenham Business Group started a campaign to support the ‘right of businesses to remain in place’ including Chick King and The Peacock Industrial Traders. Compensation is on offer but for these businesses who have spent many years working and developing reputations in the area – it’s not about the money.

Everything has changed since the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium arrived on the High Road in 2019, some say. A colossal building that looks just as a resident described, “like a spaceship” came to land adjacent to the Caribbean takeaways and mini markets, and boarded up doors.

Pioneered by Spurs CEO Daniel Levy and the last Labour council in the wake of the 2011 riots, the new stadium was set to stimulate growth in a neglected area. Many of the shop fronts facing the stadium are owned by Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC), and landowners like Spurs

will have an impact on the outcome of the regeneration, since they will need to sell property to the council.

In total, the club owns 65 buildings in Tottenham. The Council says that it is “engaging with all landowners [and] any discussions with any individual party are commercially confidential.” Money is flowing in and out of the area, but small businesses are not included in plans for development.

THFC has support from those who think that without them the high street would fall into disrepair. As the largest employer in Tottenham, the club has created many jobs for residents and the new stadium has increased the value of housing in the local area by 26% since 2014.

Owned by Spurs

Criticism comes from those who are left behind. Those whose businesses lose profit to in-house catering on match days, those

who were displaced with rising rents, and those who think that THFC has too much power.

Erik, who

used to work as a barber in a salon, (now an empty shop front opposite the stadium), suspects that creeping rents drove up the price of his chair, forcing him to move elsewhere. Many of the properties owned by THFC change hands frequently, some remain empty.

TH Property LTD (the development arm of THFC) is expanding quickly with plans in place to build 1,500 homes. They have already secured planning permission to develop 330 homes at the Goods Yard site, close to White Hart Lane Station, which will add to their affordable homes portfolio at Berland Court (in Shelbourne Road), Cannon Road and 500 White Hart Lane.

Local activist Martin Ball says the club is ‘building Spurs Land’, but their bulg-

ing property portfolio and plans do not contribute to the deficit in council housing. They are “socially cleansing the area,” he says, because they do not want to see a council estate opposite their

stadium. Temporary residents campaign group Tag Love Lane and the Peacock Industrial Estate traders have taken to social media to condemn the council for the same reason.

With the area fast becoming a prime property destination, residents on the estate worry they will be side-lined. Tag Love Lane tweeted: ‘... the contact [by the council]

“The council is struggling to regain residents’ trust”

“The traumatic impact of such schemes is seriously underestimated”

“Things have ground to a halt with the lockdown”

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turns into a mini HRW consultation/promotion for a 'Yes' vote on the ballot. Not very neutral is it."

Cllr Charles Adje, cabinet member for finance and strategic regeneration, said: "The council has committed to providing new homes on High Road West to council tenants and resident leaseholders from Love Lane. Our ambition is to work with the GLA to explore ways to increase the number of council-owned social rent homes for this scheme which could support a wider number of local residents in housing need."

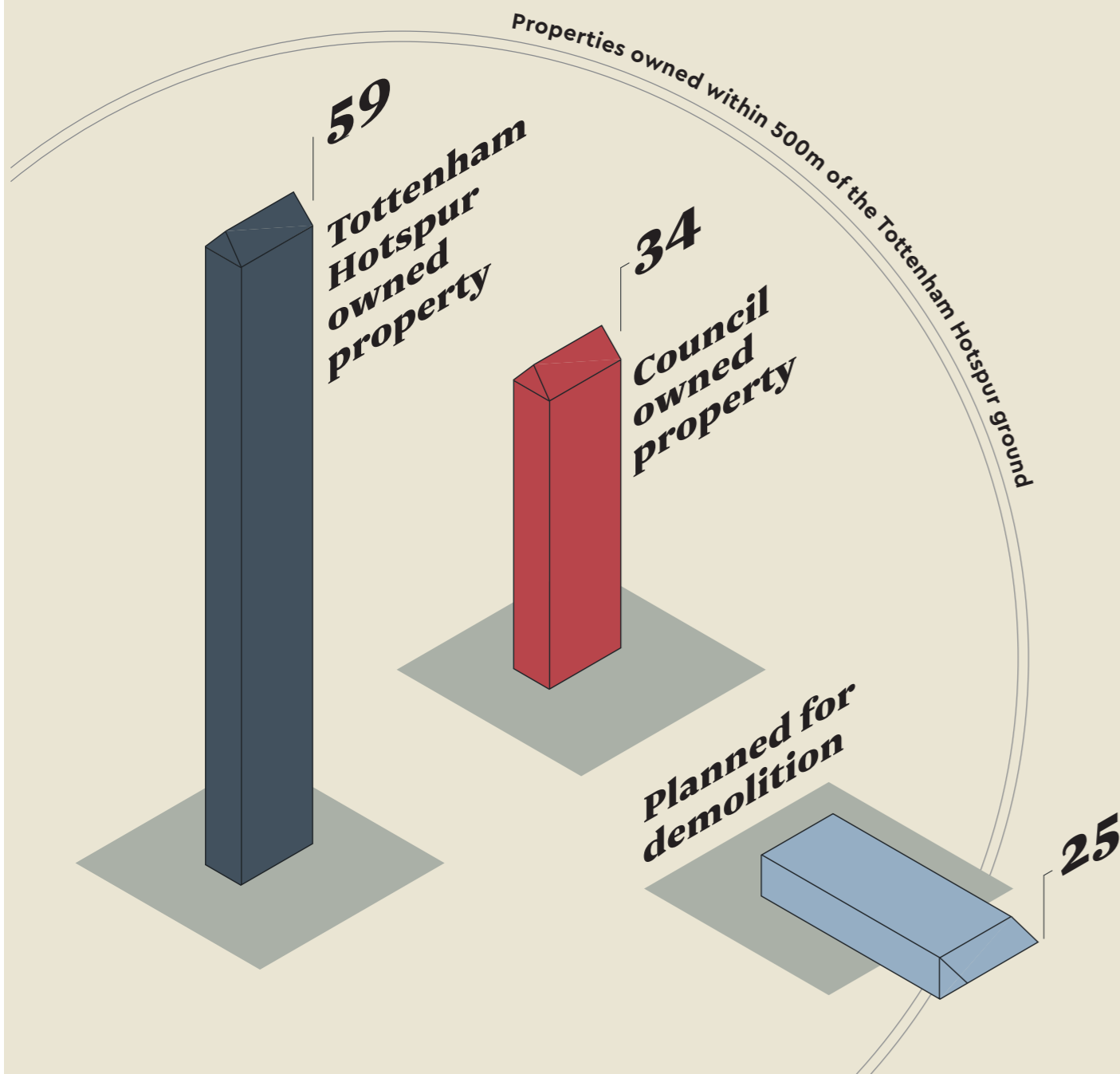
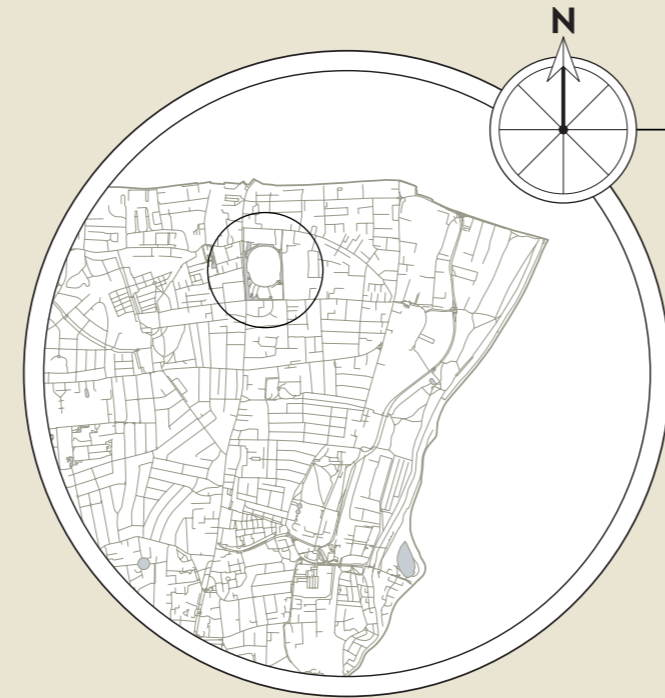
"The council is committed to meeting the GLA's requirement for a resident ballot on whether the regeneration scheme should go ahead and will only proceed when the additional homes and funding have been secured." However, the council is struggling to regain residents' trust. Living in temporary accommodation has left tenants suspicious of a housing team who haven't been able to offer them a permanent home.

With 3,100 homeless households in temporary accommodation across the borough and 10,000 households on the waiting list for permanent social housing, the council faces significant pressures. Although the number of households presenting as homeless has dropped in the last ten years it has not been accompanied by an increase in social housing lets. As a result, it is not unusual for families to languish in temporary accommodation for decades.

Damian Tissier, the Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor working on behalf of Love Lane Estate said: "The traumatic impact of such schemes is seriously underestimated."

Although sympathising with Haringey housing officers because of the pressures on social housing, Damian "is deeply concerned about several cases of historical mistreatment where homeless households have been denied access to council housing."

Experiences like this have corroded the relationship between Haringey Council and temporary



residents, many of whom are now living on the Love Lane Estate, and are not assured the safety of permanent housing.

Losing hope

Procicovia Musoke has lost hope in the capacity of her housing needs being met.

Procicovia arrived in the UK in 1998 as a refugee fleeing political persecution in Uganda. She has moved homes eleven times over the 22 years that she has been living in the borough.

Now living on the Love Lane Estate since November 2019, Procicovia was neither given the opportunity to view the property, nor told that the estate was up for demolition, when she moved in.

Working as a care assistant on zero-hour contracts she has struggled to afford private accommodation. When bailiffs came to her door in 2014, she was not provided with emergency housing by the council and spent the night in her car with her children.

Procicovia said: "I will always be grateful that I was given political asylum in the UK. When I left my country, I was looking for survival, but the way I have been treated since, particularly over my housing situation, has often made me feel that I do not have much of a life anymore."

"Many are the times I have been in despair. I still haven't found a permanent home. I can't go back to Uganda. I am full of regrets."

Procicovia wonders if the HRW development will see her displaced again. Regeneration can solve some of the borough's unmet housing needs but residents and the vulnerable are still asking – 'will High Road West provide a safe home for me and my children?'

* Name changed for privacy
Note: Tottenham Hotspur Football Club did not respond to requests for comment

Research for this article was supported by a project run by the Centre for Investigative Journalism, and funded by the Trust for London.

